

CEPPS/IRI Quarterly Report: April - June 2005
Georgia: Youth Today!
USAID Cooperative Agreement No. 114-A-00-02-00079-00
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Total Budget: \$3,744,319.00 Expenses to Date: \$2,401,907.98

I. SUMMARY

The International Republican Institute (IRI) began working in Georgia in 1997. IRI's programs have been designed to help Georgians strengthen democracy through increasing their participation in the political process. IRI's programs have concentrated on two areas: (1) political party development at both the national and regional levels, and (2) bringing Georgian youth into the political process. IRI has continued to promote and strengthen its programs in Georgia since it received the CEPPS II award in April 2002.

This quarter, IRI continued to work with political parties on their restructuring efforts. Political party plurality in Georgia is challenged due to the change in political climate after the revolution and the void of leadership and inexperience in the parties. IRI is working with the political parties to assist them in reversing this trend so that the political party life will again become competitive. IRI continued its work with regional women's groups, advising them on how to become more politically active, both in political parties and independently; and with the national youth NGO New Generation New Initiative (NGNI), assisting and advising the organization in the development of its national network of youth activists. In addition, IRI conducted a national public opinion survey.

II. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

IRI's programs primarily concentrate on two areas:

- 1) political party development at both the national and regional levels, and
- 2) bringing Georgian youth into the political process.

III. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Political Party Restructuring Consultations

During this quarter, IRI conducted more than 30 consultations with the New Conservative Party, Labor Party, United National Movement, The Conservatives Party, Union of Georgian Traditionalists and National Democratic Party to assist them in the development of a new party structure and enhance their coalition building efforts. These consultations were conducted with the goal of strengthening these groups' party bases as well as defining the role of the parties' regional offices.

IRI has been working with the political parties on restructuring their organizations since the January 2004 presidential election. These consultations are necessary because after the Rose

Revolution the new government party, United National Movement, lost up to two-thirds of their party workers because they moved into government positions. Similarly, opposition parties lost many of their operatives because they no longer felt optimistic that their parties would gain power. Opposition parties also lost private funding due to the fact that elections are not until 2006. The parties needed to learn to work with smaller, more mobilized structures.

IRI assisted the United National Movement in the development of a party strategy plan that will be in affect until 2010. The strategy plan includes the mission of the party, ideology of the party, the new structures of the party on the national and regional level, system of party members' motivation and plan of activities. This is the first example in the Georgian political history of such a comprehensive strategy plan.

National Polling Project

In June 2005, IRI conducted a nationwide issue-based survey to assess the Georgian electorate's feelings on a wide variety of issues and subjects. This information is not only used by IRI staff to better understand the effectiveness of potential messages and thus give greater assistance to the political parties, but the information is also given to political parties to further aid them in their own message development efforts. Another important aspect of the polling project is the sharing of information with the government to assist them in managing expectations.

IRI and the Baltic Survey Group presented results and analysis to seven major political parties (United National Movement, Labor Party, Freedom Party, New Conservatives, NDP, Republicans and Conservatives), USAID, the US Embassy, members of parliament (including the vice speaker), as well as the State Minister of Georgia for European Integration and the Prime Minister of Georgia.

This quarter's polling project was particularly timely as it dealt with many issues that were currently being debated in parliament. Political parties were able to use the information presented from the poll to plan strategies of how to best present their arguments on a nationwide basis to the Georgian electorate on issues, particularly that of a direct mayoral election in Tbilisi. This individual issue is controversial because the government has changed the election law to allow the Tbilisi mayorship to be determined by an electoral college, similar to the way it is done in the U.S. IRI's poll showed that this is not popular with the electorate and the political parties are using this information to help them establish a platform on the issue.

IRI's poll showed that in a number of regions, the citizens have a low opinion of the local governors due to a lack of communication and outreach with the voters. IRI's poll presentation to the prime minister's office cited this finding. One day after that presentation, the prime minister's office called an urgent meeting with all governors from around the country and discussed the need for better communication practices. Additionally, several of the governors were replaced, evidence that the poll findings are being taken seriously.

Numerous media outlets were interested in the poll and produced reports on it.

Party Building School

IRI conducted two party building schools for Georgian political party leaders. Over a five-day period, parties' top managers learned about the various aspects of the party-building process including issues of party ideology, party management, the primary system and party activities between elections. The schools consisted of 20 participants from the New Conservatives Party, Labor Party, United National Movement, the Conservatives Party, Traditionalists, and National Democratic Party.

Party Building and Party Management Seminars

This quarter, IRI Georgia conducted over 15 two-day party building seminars for United National Movement, New Conservatives, National Democratic Party, Labor Party, and New Conservatives Party. Seminars were conducted in Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Poti and Telavi. Over 500 party local activists from Tbilisi, Kakheti, Imereti and Samegrelo regional organizations were trained on the issues of the local party building, local party management, role of the local leader and local party plan writing. Each seminar included practical exercises that allowed local party activists to write party plans for their own regions.

The trainings were conducted by IRI Georgia Program Officer Dmitri Shashkin and the party's legal department officers. The seminars were conducted with individual parties because the above-mentioned discussion topics were party-specific depending on how their regional plan was created and implemented.

Youth Party Building Seminars

This quarter, IRI Georgia conducted seven Youth Party Building seminars for United National Movement, New Conservatives Party and NDP. Over 300 youth activists from Tbilisi and Imereti youth regional organizations attended these seminars. The goal of the seminars was to help parties' youth organizations find their role in the political life of Georgia and make their efforts more effective for involving of the Georgian youth in political processes.

These seminars are necessary because youth party organizations have unclear agendas between elections. Their role during the campaign is clear, but the organizations are not used when there are no elections. IRI's goal with the youth party building seminars is to help them develop an action plan on the national and local level for the next six months and then assist the organizations in implementing that plan. During the two-day seminars, youth participants were trained on the issues of the role of the party youth organization, youth party building and youth party management. Participants were also taught how to work in teams and how to properly conduct youth outreach programs. IRI showed participants possible action plans and the groups, with the trainer's assistance, developed concrete and specific plans for their regions plan of activities.

IRI also conducted two five-day party youth camp for the New Conservatives Party. During the training, 74 youth leaders of the party learned party youth organization management issues and the role of the youth organization in the political processes and election campaign. The goals of the training were to develop political and leadership skills among new youth members of political parties, and to assist them in the development of long-term strategies for institutional reform. The training also worked to strengthen operations of party youth wings through public outreach. Party chairman and members of the main council also participated in the training.

New Generation New Initiative (NGNI) and Youth NGO Development

IRI conducted 15 consultations with its main youth NGO partner, New Generation New Initiative (NGNI). IRI assisted NGNI in opening offices in Akhaltsikhe and Dusheti, and in the planning of opening regional offices in Zugdidi, Poti and Gori, over the next several months. IRI also assisted with trainings on how to effectively manage and run a regional office and best tactics for continued development. The consultations also included working directly with the leadership of NGNI to advise them of best practices of organizing seminars and strategic planning for election observation mission in CIS countries. IRI continued to work with NGNI in the development of their national network.

During this quarter, IRI also continued to work closely with NGNI on project development for “Caucasus Youth Portal.” The project is funded by European Youth Foundation (EYF) and is aimed future development of an informational database (web portal, informational booklets, journal and etc). From June 26-30, meetings took place where participants from youth organizations and governmental youth structures from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia participated along with representatives from USAID, World Learning, IRI and the European Youth Forum (YFJ). The aim of the meetings was to prepare a model of informational database and then to present it to the youth organizations, donors and all the other organizations dealing with the problems of youth in Caucasus region.

IRI continued to work with the youth group Sunny House during this quarter. Over the previous three months, Sunny House has trained over 85 youth in Kutaisi, Rustavi, Batumi on developing leadership and team building skills. These activities culminated with a conference in Bakuriani, that IRI helped sponsor, for 20 young people from throughout the country exemplifying the best leadership skills. IRI representatives attended this four-day event and were invited to provide advanced leadership lessons and seminars for the youth.

The target group for the participants of the leadership trainings were young people aged 18-25, who are either students or other active members of Georgian society. The participants were representatives of most of the regions of Georgia. IRI staff also participated directly in the trainings and lent assistance when requested.

Methodology in project implementation included leadership and team building activities that focused on social inclusion of youth, methods of active participation and developing leadership and management skills that may be unique to the varied cultures of the regions of Georgia. Other

sub-themes included, but were not be limited to: team building and collaboration, citizenship rights and responsibilities, as well as elements of small-scale project management.

In addition to NGNI and Sunny House, IRI is also working closely with another local youth group, Kmara, on the development of an internship program that will allow young professionals from Georgia to work as interns in Lithuanian government ministries and NGOs. The internship program is expected to begin around September 2005. IRI's role will be to assist in identifying partners and host institutions in Georgia and Lithuania, as well as select the interns that will participate. The internships are expected to last approximately three months. It is hoped that IRI will be able to establish a strong relationship with the Lithuanians which will in turn lead to the easier facilitation of programs such as the internship exchange.

During the quarter, IRI also facilitated an exchange for members of Kmara to train Burmese youth activists in Thailand. IRI Georgia funding was not used for this project.

Women's Work

During this quarter, IRI conducted more than seven consultations with local representatives from the women's NGO *Tamarioni* in Tbilisi, Poti and Telavi that dealt with strengthening the capacity of this women's NGO's regional office in Tbilisi, Kakheti and Imereti. These consultations dealt with how to effectively run a regional office, best communication practices with the head office, and how to recruit new members. The consultations also began to direct the women's focus on participation in the upcoming 2006 local elections.

Over 60 women were trained by IRI in three leadership trainings which were done in this quarter. These trainings were conducted in Telavi, Borjomi and Poti. Women from Labor Party, New Conservatives Party, United National Movement, and Republican Party participated as well as those from the NGO *Tamarioni*.

IV. RESULTS/ACCOMPLISHMENTS

This is IRI's first quarterly report under its new USAID Cooperative Agreement. With this new agreement, IRI has changed the indicators to reflect new programming and a changed political landscape in Georgia.

Result 1: *Young men and women will become more politically active, showing they are a formidable force for democratic change.*

Indicators:

- A. Large numbers of young men and women participate in the 2006 local and 2008 parliamentary elections.

No results to report

- B. The number of youth civic oriented projects conducted with IRI assistance increases.
- C. Political parties show progress in strengthening their youth branches including developing outreach strategies to various constituencies with a focus on youth and women, and concentrate on creating youth party auxiliaries.

The New Conservatives party youth organization elected the new Chairman of the youth party and opened party offices in 49 rayons of Georgia.

- D. The number of women candidates in the elections increases.

No results to report

- E. Women show increased understanding about the political processes.

Result 2: *Youth NGOs in Georgia develop into independent, grassroots entities that work to shape the political debate and increase the number of youth engaged in the political process.*

Indicators:

- A. New Generation-New Initiative (NGNI) will conduct political educational programs geared towards developing a grassroots network of youth activists throughout the country and will also focus on local government elections.

New Generation-New Initiative (NGNI) has opened regional offices in Dusheti and Akhaltsikhe. During last three months, NGNI conducted over 15 seminars all across Georgia with the goal of developing a grassroots network of youth activists.

- B. Georgian youth organizations, led by NGNI and Kmara, will participate in at least four outreach projects with various counterpart organizations in Kazakhstan, Moldova and Belarus and other CIS countries to strengthen youth organizations and youth branches of political parties and also strengthen youth observation networks for national elections.

IRI assisted with the logistics and planning to send one of Kmara's leaders to Thailand to help local youth organizations.

Result 3: *National and regional political party organizations will increase the level of intra-party communication and increase the importance of party platforms.*

- Indicators:***
- A. Major political parties will create regional and national party plans based on voter needs and concerns.

United National Movement created party developing strategy plan up to year 2010. The strategy plan includes the mission of the party, ideology of the party, the new structures of the party on the national and regional level, system of party members' motivation and plan of activities. This is the first example in the Georgian political history of such a comprehensive strategy plan.

- B. Major political parties will conduct internal and self sustaining party training programs to strengthen party ideology.

The Conservatives Party created the training center within the party that started the series of the seminars in the newly-created party rayon organizations.

The New Conservatives Party's youth organization initiated the weekend debates when on the every weekend youth party members will participated in the lectures and debates on the issues of the party ideology.

- C. Major political parties will create strong regional departments within the party to increase communication between national and regional offices.

The Conservatives Party conducted primary elections of the party Chairman. This was the first time in the Georgian history when a party chairman was elected during the competitive race by party regional delegates.

The Labor Party created the regional department within the main headquarters that will be the responsible for the supervising of the implementation of the voter outreach programs conducted by party rayon offices.

The United National Movement finished the process of opening regional party offices throughout Georgia.

- D. Political parties use issue-based survey data to formulate platform messages that will resonate with the electorate.

The Conservatives party especially used information from the polling project to formulate a campaign strategy to draw attention to the unpopular measure of having the Tbilisi city mayor elected by the city council.

Result 4: *The Government of Georgia develops legislation that takes into consideration survey research and caters to electorate needs.*

Indicators:

- A. The Georgian government uses issues-based research analysis to pass legislation that is more based on the Georgian electorate's stated needs.

Based on focus group results regarding the unemployment issues, the Georgian government began formulating a five-year plan to reduce the rate of unemployment. The focus group showed that citizens, who are employed, will call themselves unemployed for a variety of reasons. Without understanding these reasons, the government will not be able to find the correct solution.

Result 5: *The Georgian government develops and strengthens reform policies that take into consideration lessons learned from exchange programs with other reform-minded countries in the region.*

Indicators:

- A. Georgian government officials participate in exchange programs with governmental institutions in the Baltic countries and work more closely with other transition countries in the region to share and receive information that better helps the Georgian government draft legislation aimed at advancing reform efforts.

No results to report